285 them, bring them to market along with embroidery. These include not only spinning baskets and hand-carrying baskets, but also large osier panniers used in transport—a man can carry one on his back, a horse, two. I believe that the panniers are made by men.

326 Other containers include copperwork and pottery. The coppersmiths in each town hammer out sheets of metal into round trays, which can be used for baking cheese dishes, pastry, etc., or for tea and coffee service. They also make kettles, water jugs, and washbasins. All of these things are purchased by the mountaineers, who now and then acquire a European chamber-pot to use as soup tureen, and a set of glass tumblers.

323 Three kinds of pottery find their way into the mountaineer's household. In the Catholic tribes, if not elsewhere, the women still make an Iron Age vessel, of simple profile, with handles, without slip, and decorated by incisions. It is hand-modeled, and fired in such a way as to give it a black surface. In the towns, professional male potters make a porous ware on the wheel. This is used for carrying and storing water. Regular modern glazed pottery is imported from Italy, and subsequently sold in the bazaars.

251 Food preservation and storage techniques vary between Catholics and Moslems, owing to their differences in diet. The Catholics preserve much pork by salting and smoking. The men of each household will butcher as many fat pigs as the family needs or can spare, in the fall. They cut the belly fat into flitches and hang it over the fire. An especial delicacy is the *peshk*, or "fish," a long strip of lean back-bacon, smoke-cured, which they cut in slices and fry. Besides these whole pork pieces, they make sausages and cure them in the same way. The Moslems as a rule eat only fresh meat and live on mutton, whereas Catholics eat both mutton and pork.

[262]

Both store their cereals and legumes in tubs and bags in the house, and keep maize in special outdoor corncribs, elevated to protect them from rats. Very often a fierce dog will be seen and heard, chained under the crib.

234 Both make butter from their cows' milk, and cheese from that of sheep and goats, although the use of the latter is much more common

000 among the Moslems. Catholics, in country fit

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number is limited only by the amount of winter grazing available, which small owners find, and have always found, in the oak zone. In Turkish times, when Albania and Macedonia were both Turkish provinces and had no customs barriers between them as they have now, large owners sought it on the roomy plain of Salonica. Since Albanian emancipation in 1912 they have been confined to the more meagre pastures on the seaward side of the coastal plain at home, a restriction which has entailed a considerable cutting down of their flocks and herds. Nevertheless, in 1936–7 taxes were paid on 1,424,965 sheep, 773,969 goats, 144,763 cattle and 44,318 horses in the whole of Albania;[1] there are no separate figures for its northern half. Many more animals ran about the houses, unregistered and free of tax. For Albanians the importance of sheep lies, it should be noted, not only in their wool and meat as in England, but in their milk and the butter and cheese made from it.

If only the coastal plain were more spacious, it would be a perfect complement to the mountains for pastoralism on the grand scale. In the portion south of Lesh the rivers Drin, Mat and Ishm, entering the sea at points less than 6 miles apart, have created what is virtually one vast delta of mud and swamp, lush undergrowth, and trees that have come too quickly to maturity. Farther south, swamps of the same type cover much of the Plain of Durrës, and a great lagoon extends to the very outskirts of the town. Two more lagoons and a series of swamps mark the estuaries of the rivers Shkumbî and Seman on the coast of Myzeqe. More marshes and the lagoon of Kakarriq outline the course of the River Buenë in the north.

On the coast the average yearly rainfall is 39–47 inches, against 57 at Shkodër, 67 at Krujë and 72 at Pukë, an inland place 39 miles east of Shkodër. Albania is one of the wettest countries in Europe because so many of its ranges run from north to south and are high enough to intercept the rain-laden clouds that drift in from the west. The first rains fall in October when it is still hot on the coastal plain. The moisture and the heat combine to produce a luxuriant crop of new grass by the time that the sheep come down from the mountains.

This grass is found, not only in the hay meadows and swamps, but also, owing to the violence of the winter rains, on all the arable land,

[1] Gashi, *Shqipnija*, p. 117.

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reasons, be no openings in the ground-floor walls except the doorway, but square holes were left in those of the upper floor for windows. Except in rich houses these 'windows' were not glazed. At night they were closed in rich as in poor houses by propping stone slabs against them or sliding wooden panels across them. Those in a one-storeyed cluster were usually too high for the curious outside to peep through or the hostile to shoot through. Nikollë Gjetë Coka of Breg i Matit, putting his trust in the exemplary peace which King Zog's government had established throughout Albania, neglected this ancient precaution and was shot in 1938 by some Mirdites who thrust their rifles through the window of the room in which he sat at supper. At the top of a tower there were usually loop-holes, splayed to give a wider field of fire and low enough to let a man kneel as he shot. When these were found in a clustered house, as they often were, it was naturally on a vulnerable side, where they might also be reinforced by turrets in the wall of the farmyard. In the kitchen, where the women and children must spend the day and evening, the hearth continued in the middle because more people could sit round it in that position.

In planning his house the Albanian householder sought chiefly shelter from the elements and his enemies, and took no thought for beauty. When villages are picturesque, as many are, it is always for such extraneous reasons as their site, the line of their roofs against a lightly clouded sky, and the greenery surrounding them, rather than for the architecture of their individual houses. A tower, it is true, may have machicoulis over its door or under an upper window, and these give it distinction; its elevation and its usual situation on a knoll may also be attractive. The best examples, some of them over two hundred years old, may be seen in Lurë. But few clustered houses are more than an assemblage of featureless boxes.

In the bigger houses the furnishings altered little from those of the simplest type already described. Mattresses and pillows were probably added to the bedding, and the floor of the sitting-room, instead of being left bare, was covered with mats made from reeds grown in the swamps near the coast. In the cold north and north-east there was usually a layer of earth under the mats; it made an admirable shield against winter blasts. Chairs remained rarities and stools were still confined to the kitchen with its chilly earthen floor. Workers being more plentiful, enough animals to make butter could be kept; the churn was made by hollowing out a section of tree-trunk.